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LETTERS

FROM

Monf. La V---- at London,

To A FRIEND AT PARIS;

During the course of MONSIEUR DE BUSSY'S
Negociation, in the Year 1761.

Translated from the FRENCH.

LONDON

Printed for A. MORE in Fleet-street.

M DCC LXIII.

[Price One Shilling]

LETTERS

FROM

Montezuma V. at London

TO A FRIEND AT A RARE

During the course of Montezuma's visit to the
Negotiations in the Year 1763

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The British Museum



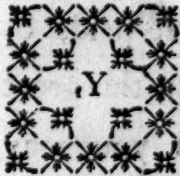


LETTERS

FROM A

FRENCHMAN in LONDON, &c.

LETTER I.

 O U must be obey'd my dear count, whatever be the difficulty of the undertaking --- an attempt to delineate the present state of our negotiation and the parties and politics of this country, is surely hazardous — but for your information and the entertainment of our friends in the Orleanois, I will venture: the ladies shall find some account of the ruling modes and diversions of this metropolis; that may relieve their attention after the very serious part: and

B

Mademoi-

Mademoiselle de Gournay shall hear something of those fine arts, of which she is so warm a friend and so elegant an advocate.

The work of peace is now indeed at hand, my dear count, but what a peace must it be to France! the English know *our* weakness and *their own* strength, and rigorously insist on terms to which, neither our pride nor interest can submit — their Monsieur l'orateur Pitt talks in the high strain of a victor, of honour and glory, and the interest of his country — Imagine the dignity and exultation of Cicero after the defeat of Catiline's designs; imagine the noble pride of Scipio after the battle of Zama, when the great Hannibal fled before him, and then you may have some idea of this haughty Englishman. — In his very eyes you may discern the genuine spirit of his country; that spirit of energy which cannot be resisted — that spirit which baffles all our Buffy's designs, and annihilates all our artifices.---He is indeed almost the only one we dread: almost the only one whose firmness cannot be daunted, whose penetration cannot

cannot be eluded, whose integrity cannot be corrupted: --- Instruct us, O! Le Seignelay; how to proceed; how shall we act against this destroyer of our country?

You know the point where the negociation now rests, from Potier, whom I sent express to Paris, on Lally's business. --- You know our pretensions to New-foundland, and you know its consequence. --- You very well know the weakness of our claim, the sophisms on which it is built by a strain'd and unsincere construction of the treaty of Utrecht --- how then can we hope to succeed, unless our negotiations are with the ignorant, the corrupt or the negligent --- We have indeed met with many of these, but Pitt is not one of them.

MONSIEUR de Buffy has used all that finesse, and all that delicate science of state-intrigue of which he is so complete a master --- he has required only a corner of the island, with a right to fish within certain limits and under certain restrictions.

strictions, --- he has consented to limitations, which, in appearance, would reduce our interest to nothing, but with proper management would totally disappear. — Geography is uncertain, limits may be mistaken, and our interest requires some incroachments towards the stone walls of Placentia. --- O! de Seignelay, should we be too scrupulous in such a case, where France is so essentially concerned?

You know how our French sailors live; as they are half-starved they best answer the purpose of œconomy; with that œconomy should we not soon undersell the English, and render our poor *privilege* superior to their *sovereign and territorial jurisdiction*? I am fond of the idea and wish Pitt was master of a more compliant disposition --- We doubt not however to gain this point, even against his will, by our influence with others.

THERE were days my dear count, when the good people of England were more pacific,-- You
know

know the character of Sir Robert Walpole, who long ruled this nation with the golden sceptre of corruption ; he diffused among them an inglorious cowardice, a contemptible ambition of places and ill-deserved pensions, and a comprehensive knowledge of the science of borough-hunting.--- This was a man whose abilities were not extraordinary, whose views were limited, whose ear was deaf to the calls of public virtue, and whose art of government was the art of corruption --- he rose above his superiors by the ill-regulated affection of his sovereign : that personal predilection was his great support ; those qualities which rendered his private life not despicable, were of little consequence when strength and spirit were to be exerted, public measures to be promoted and the complicated machine of government to be regulated --- this was a man for us, my dear count, Oh may we not soon hope to see such another ?

PITT stands like a rock, but there are rocks of a stupendous magnitude, which by a geometrical

trical choice of the center, will librate by the touch of an infant's finger. --- Why then may not this rock fall by the undermining cunning of some state pioneer, or be shaken by the weak hand of a woman? Bussy is a good geometri-
cian in politics; he will place him if possible in so unsettled a position as to be easily moved --- By some account of the state of parties here, you will soon understand the nature of this al-
lusion,

You have heard how Mr. Pitt acquired the management of affairs, at a time when such a man was essentially necessary to the preservation of the state: you remember our successes in 1756, and the despondency of the English; the weakness of their ministry, the loss of Mino-
ca, their miserable situation in the woods of Ame-
rica, and the misfortunes of Byng: this was a time, when by a support of F--x in the mi-
nisty, we might easily have continued the ra-
pidity of our conquests, extended our com-
merce, and ruined the marine and credit of our
enemies

enemies : all this we might have done, had not one man exerted his talents in defence of his country, and by successfully opposing the administration of Mr. F--x, destroyed all our measures --- his influence was extensive in the house of Commons, the great representative of the people ; his voice was loud, and his heart warm, in defence of vigorous and patriotic measures : his eloquence was irresistible as that of Pericles, when he thundered and lightened in Athens ; the nation felt it, their own hearts agreed with the vigour of his sentiments, and their own judgement applauded the force and spirit of his resolutions, and the dignity and propriety of his proceedings ; the voice of the public was loud, they all called on him as their deliverer ; in this state, where Monarchy is only the basis, and supports the building of a more enlarged government, the voice of the public must be regarded ; he was raised into power by an almost universal consent, tho' opposed by malignant insinuations and the want of his sovereign's affections.

MEASURES

MEASURES were then adopted inconsistent with his sentiments, all his designs were thwarted, and he soon resigned. --- The nation again rose up as one man, and in 1758 replaced him in his former office. --- From this period we may date the ministry of Mr. Pitt.

LET us take a view my dear Le Seignelay, of his subsequent conduct. — The government, on his admission, was weak, lax, and disunited; the spirit of party prevailed, and all liberal and public motives were drowned in the gulph of private interest. — Under him the face of affairs was soon changed, unhappily for Versailles. — The nation was unanimous; supplies were granted freely, and expended with a spirit tempered with œconomy; the military ardour was revived; Goree and Senegal changed their masters; merit was promoted; Wolfe was sent to Quebec, and Canada fell --- Amherst succeeded the Scotch North-American generals, and the Continent was reduced; our Guadaloupe was reduced

reduced ; our coasts were alarmed ; our harbours destroyed ; our trade ruined ; du Quesne and de La Clue were defeated ; Conflans fled into the Villaine, to escape the enemy whom he had often threatened ; and our settlements in the East-Indies were annihilated --- All Europe looked on us and smiled with contempt — Oh ! de Seignelay, where were then Richlieu and Mazarin, where were Louvois and Colbert ? Where were the Turennes ; the Conde's, the Luxemburgs and the Catinats of former times ; or whither were fled the guardian genius of our country, and the spirits of our ancestors ? they regarded us not, they left us to the distaff of a woman, and the truncheons of Richlieu, Soubise and Contades --- The thought torments me and I am not master of my temper.

THE nation was thus powerful and happy when the good old king died ; the debt was paid to Nature at the most seasonable time ; in the height of human prosperity ; all his subjects mourned for him as sons for their father, and

could be consoled only by their expectations from his successor ; from him they hoped a continuance of the same measures, and a prosecution of the same vigorous efforts. --- They were not disappointed ; the monarch was unprejudiced, and Pitt was still in power : their fleets are still employed, and their commerce still flourishes ; our prizes are become their objects of ridicule, and they smile at our invasions : on our very coast they have planted their standards, and intercept all the trade of Biscay, from Ushant to Bourdeaux, from *their* island of Belle-isle. Success still attends them in every enterprize, and we are now obliged to sue for a peace, perhaps not more favourable to us than the most ruinous war ; these are the events which followed this man's admission, and which that alone could have produced.

PITY us my friend who are reduced to the low, servile practices of chicanery ; pity us who are here appointed to watch the whimsies of discontented ambition, to seize the proper opportunity

nity of seduction, and the season for infusing the spirit of discord into the cabinet --- in private life we despise these arts of meanness, *sed patriæ causa quid non subeundum?*

Our great point is not yet carried but our approaches are regular, and our mines undiscovered; our political engineer pursues the great maxims of Philip of Macedon, and builds his faith on the ass laden with gold; you remember the line of the oracle to that enemy of Demosthenes

Αργυρία δόρυ καὶ μάχη καὶ παρὰ κρηττόν

It is a miserable consolation to us at the expence of human nature, that corruption is not found in our France alone; it is not uncommon in this nation of Philosophers as Montesquieu and Voltaire affect to call them; Rochefoucault is the real judge of human nature, when he maintains the almost universal depravity of mankind.

--- It is a mortifying confession my dear count,
but sincerity requires it.

In my next letter you may expect to hear something more of our juggling negotiation, and the progress of our attacks on the English Of-lando--- Oh ! for some Urganda with the magic of insinuation to assist us in his destruction ! the wand of an enchantress has often succeeded where the spear of the knight was of no effect ! when both co-operate surely they cannot be resisted !

Adieu my dear count, pity the poor drudge,
half-secretary and half-statesman

La V

LETTER II.

WE are told from Versailles that our negotiation advances very slowly, and we do nothing. — Judge of us my friend not by the impatience of the ignorant or ill-informed, who expect the completion of their wishes in a moment and foresee no difficulties. — Judge of us by our endeavours which are indeed wonderful and merit success. — May the event prove our justification.

Bussy has often visited the orator, but cannot dive into his designs ; he is always laconic and sententious, peremptory in his demands, and obstinately determined against any relaxation ; he talks of our monarch as humbled into submission and requires concessions proportioned to the present state of our nation ; surely he forgets that we are the people over whom Louis le Grand once ruled ; that Louis who refused to comply with disgraceful demands and preferred a tomb
under

under the ruins of his throne to any infamous humiliation. II. Louis le Grand was *then* our monarch, de Seignelay.

We fret at the thoughts of an English ultimatum; where these islanders got this style of impetuosity may to you seem a wonder, but we know whence it proceeds: our king is not well treated by this democratic statesman: he draws a circle round him, like the Roman ambassador in Ægypt, and insists on a categorical answer before he passes the circumference --- does Monsieur Stanley support these ultimatums with equal haughtiness, or is the impulse weakened by communication?

They require from us a cession of Goree and Senegal, and an almost utter extinction of our African trade: on *them* we must depend for our gum and our slaves: without *their* assistance, St. Domingo, Martinique and Guadaloupe must lie uncultivated, and our colonies are to rise or fall, according to their construction of our barometer:

meter : we insist on one of them as it is impossible to obtain both, and by that demand propose to defeat all their intentions --- the inland trade of Africa will lie *equally* open to us if we have Goree, and we *entirely* command the sea-coast ; Senegal is a wide defenceless river, and they can never exclude us from a participation of its benefits, without adhering to their present resolution ; if we can shake them in this point the gum and slave coasts lie open to us.

MANY difficulties are started about the neutral islands in the West-Indies, of which they require an exact and equal partition ; they have claims to St. Lucia as once in their possession, settled at a great expence by the duke of Montague, and ungenerously and unjustly wrested from him by the power of France ; the supine inattention and perhaps the corruption of the ministry at that time, prevented any notice being taken of this insult ; now they think it a proper time to re-assert their claims and exclude St. Lucia from the number of the neutral islands. --- They will however

ever relax in this point, and consent to a division if St. Lucia become one of their share; they regard it, and justly, as of the utmost importance for its harbour and situation; as it lies to the windward of all our settlements, they could ruin our trade and make descents on our plantations with the utmost security; the port is one of the best in the American seas, and the land remarkably proper for the production of all West-India commodities --- Oh that we could lead them blindfold to draw lots, that we could turn their backs on St. Lucia, and lay their fingers on St. Vincent and Tobago!

A word or two concerning allies --- would you believe that there are such words still existing, as National honour, and publick engagements? they are here however in vogue, and their hero of Prussia must not be deserted --- one would think this Pitt imagined honesty as necessary in the high affairs of the world as in domestic life; surely Mentor in Telemachus has persuaded him that

that *national interest* is not incompatible with *national fidelity*; on this foundation however we are to proceed to his ruin, and happy be our architecture!

In the year 1757, when Pitt first became secretary of state, he opposed a continental war with all his influence — the nation was *then* weak and dejected — there was *then* a necessity of other employment for the national troops of Britain — British measures, he thought might be pursued without any connection with foreign objects, and America might be reduced tho' Hanover should suffer. — This he said, and this he thought. --- He spoke slightly of former continental treaties --- argued against those ministers who had lately contracted engagements with Russia and other powers. --- Thus he argued but he prevailed not --- his sovereign was not his friend --- his sovereign loved Hanover --- and Pitt resigned:

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AFTER

AFTER the utmost testimonies of publick gratitude, Pitt was again exalted into power by the wishes of the people; he found himself almost alone, unsupported by any interest in the council but that which arose from his integrity and abilities. --- All his fellow-counsellors unanimous in cherishing the kings natural regard to his own country, and refusing to co-operate with *him* on any other terms --- the French he saw formidable in the empire unless checked by the interposition of Britain --- he considered that Hanover, under the power of France, would in any future peace outweigh all his conquests, and that to obtain a cession of these woods of lower Saxony, Canada and Cape-Breton must return to our obedience if his designs against them should be crowned by success --- the nation was then loud in their encomiums of the king of Prussia; they considered him as the only prince by whose alliance they could repress the pride of France on the Continent, and divert her attention to the plains of Westphalia from objects of far greater importance.

importance. --- This they regarded as a secondary plan of policy, as the great episode in the epic of the war, which must essentially promote the conduct of the whole. Mr. Pitt yielded to his sovereign --- to the council --- and to the people --- the parliament approved his proceedings, and the duke of Marlborough was sent at the head of British troops into Germany.

You know, my dear count, the nature of courts and the various springs of their divisions; among us they often arise from personal piques or private animosities; here, they are more generally the consequence of difference of opinion in public measures, or of opposite ideas of government; from these causes there has been an almost perpetual contention between the Wigs and Tories of England: Mr. Pitt, as a whig, was ever suspicious of the principles of the Tories; he dreaded their attachment to despotism, he supported the present established form of government, and asserted the liberties of the people: yet was he not the dupe of any party; when a whig ministry debased

debased the spirit and exhausted the strength of the people, he joined in a vigorous opposition in the very infancy of his political life : as he was conscious that the love of his country should be his predominant principle, he regarded not names, he opposed pernicious counsels however sanctified, he became the terror of corrupt ministers however supported. — Walpole and Fox were at different times the just objects of his resentment --- thus he became beloved by the unprejudiced and honest part of the nation, tho' hated and reviled by the dishonest and abandoned of all parties, and chiefly by the tories.

YET, such is the force of conviction, these very tories joined him in applauding this connection with Germany (as affairs were then circumstanced) and promoted with all their vigour the treaty with Prussia ; they united in all his views ; and seemed, in their pursuit of honest and useful measures, to have dropt the spirit of a faction, and *once* to have become patriots and real lovers of their country.

HORACE

HORACE, who was our favourite on the banks of the Loire, when we little thought of politics, says, there is a bent in the natural disposition which cannot be overcome, *Naturam expellas furca licet tamen usque recurret*; the embers of discontent and discord may be smothered for a time; parties may grow cool and lose the heat of their former principles, and Tories may become patriots; but the sparks must soon again revive; Oh! why have we breath but to to blow them up to a flame?

WHAT money could do has been done --- authors have written for us and senators declaimed --- privy counsellors have smiled upon us and ladies have spoken in our favour --- continental connections *on any account* have been decried; the orator's motives in this point misrepresented; the king of Prussia vilified; the expences of *this nation* have been exaggerated and its credit and commerce lessened by the whispers of our emissaries; *our* trade flourishing and *our* resources inexhaustible; the terrors of Spain have been raised aloft

aloft to their view ; bug-bears have been difcovered, and chimæras have vomited fire ; Buffy has indeed been a Proteus and all of us little Harlequins ; I myfelf have affumed a greater variety of difguifes than that wooden-fworded chief in his flight with the fair Colombine.

We have made almoft a complete conqueft of one part of the ifland ; it eafily furrendered, being fo clofely connected with the enemy of Mr. Pitt --- by this epithet you may imagine I diftinguifh Mr. F--x ——— far from it --- a more illuftrious meteor has taken poffeffion of that eminence of oppofition, and, like his native Aurora borealis, darts his propitious radiations on the South of the Hemifphere, be it our endeavour to direct them on *us* with a more peculiarly friendly lultre !

Would you believe that in the midft of a treaty of peace the preparations for war are not here remitted ? A Squadron is now ready, and others preparing, to purfue the war by deftroying the
remnant

remnant of our poor colonies : I fear for our Martinique as I know it to be long the object of the minister's attention ; I dread any of those North American conquerors, who saw the brave Wolfe fall, and pursued the plan he had established ; surely the conquerors of Quebec would not shudder at the walls of St. Pierre !

You were at Rochfort when that Wolfe first signalized himself ; you remember his intrepidity at Aix, and his polite humanity to my brother who became his prisoner. --- Assure yourself that the ideas we then conceived of him were not ill-founded ; his subsequent conduct justified our opinion, and the gratitude of the English was justly his due : they call him their Gaston de Foix and Epaminondas ; the latter is indeed more peculiarly a well-adapted name, as to the qualities of a great soldier and commander, he added those of a man of letters and of virtue ; he no less resembled the Theban in his life than in his death ——— had the young Count de Gisors lived

lived, we might among us have seen such a man.

Why does Madam de Ternay ridicule the publick diversions of England? Were she here she would, I am convinced, become a convert, and, if she understood the language, prefer Shakespeare to Corneille, and Garrick to Baron; she would here find a Brent not inferior to the Florentine, and her beloved Naples rivaled by the musick of an English Oratorio: a German has indeed done more here than Lully could in our orchestras.

MADAM de Ternay once talked of a frolick in a man's habit, and riding post to Rome to see the Jubilee; I now give her encouragement; let her assume the dress and courage of that boisterous sex and ramble hither under the cover of the law of nations; she will then be a more accurate observer of the diversions and letters of this great kingdom, and an adept in its politicks; I speak also from self-interest mixed with public motives;

motives; my own anxieties would be lessened; my joys heightened and improved, and France perhaps reap no inconsiderable advantage: have not the ladies the chief direction in affairs of state? are they not all endowed with a natural eloquence, superior to all artificial casuistry? Might not fine eyes strike where gold itself has no influence, and is not Madame de Ternay a greater politician than de Buffi or La V ———? let her try the adventure and I will insure the success.

I was last week at a meeting of the Society of Arts, about which Mademoiselle de Gournay is so inquisitive; there were paintings, which even in her eye, would appear not despicable; Portraits of great merit, history-pieces in their infancy; Landscape in no small perfection from the hands of the Smiths of Suffex; you remember the Carraccis; these brothers have not their eminence but they have great merit, and may rise by the influence of such public encouragement. We have often wondered why there should be a Roman, Venetian, Lombard, a Flemish

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and

and a French school, and never an English ; the want of encouragement seemed the obstacle, and, as that is now removed, may we not dread a rivalship ? I am jealous of the honour of my country, and fear the fate of Le Brun and Poussin, when opposed to some future Englishman with a Gothic name.

THIS society confines not it's attention to the fine arts ; whatever lies within the circle of arts, commerce and manufactures, becomes an object of their cognizance ; the invention of a rudder on a new principle, or a more convenient drill-plough, is the subject of many a debate ; the peers of the kingdom are now interested in these useful matters ; they neglect Newmarket and become members of this publick-spirited institution ; the Royal Society is almost forgotten in these points, and confines its sage researches to the rust of a medal, the wing of a papilion, or the branches of a Coralline. --- Too much similar to this, my dear Count, is our Royal Academy.

HAVING

HAVING been so many years in England in my very early youth, I can at will become, in manners and language, almost an Englishman; my friends at Orleans would not know me were I to appear among them in my present figure; so much am I changed from the gay, the giddy La V ———: how then can Mademoiselle imagine I remember the Muses or dream of the waters of Helicon, in a climate so remote from the fount of inspiration? I am become a porer over gazettes, and not an associate to poets--- Rousseau lives not in London --- and Voltaire is in Geneva, or among the vineyards of Burgundy; why then should I associate with poets?

YET have I heard of some here, and read the works of others not unworthy of her attention; if I could translate THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION, she should have it to prepossess her in favour of English poetry and philosophy; the odes of this great man, Akenfide, are in the genuine spirit of Pindar, full of publick zeal, energy and sublimity; Alceus seems however to have been more
his

his model, nor does the modern yield to that enemy of Tyrants in his love of liberty. --- I have sent you the Elegy translated by my friend de Courteille ; but how unlike the solemn plaintiveness, the sensible moral melancholy of the original ! My good friend is not indeed equal to Gray. --- I have seen the scourge of the theatres, of whom you must have heard some strange relations : as a son of the church he has been persecuted for straying beyond the pale of the inclosure ; may not a man smile, de Seignelay, with a black gown, or talk of a player without deviating from a purity of morals ? he has indeed been at too much trouble in transfixing the poor flies, who would so soon have perished, despised and neglected — real dramatic writers are of late unusual, but we have here play-wrights in abundance ; the English can indeed boast of no Moliere. — I read to you the English orphan of China, when last we spent a summer in Picardie ; we then conceived no mean idea of the author ; since that, my dear count, he is become a writer of many farces.

We

WE expect every day couriers from Madrid with dispatches from the Italian minister ; if we prevail on him to insist on being included in the treaty with us, we shall rouse the spirit of Pitt, who will undoubtedly reject the intrusion as an insult — Spain is arrogant and is jealous of England ; we shall soon break their union and secure to ourselves the strength of other forces and the assistance of other Indies.

Adieu, my dear count, you now receive a long letter of politicks, painting, poetry and nonsense ; pardon the whimsies of a man who lives under an atmosphere, which sensibly varies every day, and must, consequently affect the judgment and imagination. --- Adieu again my dear Count, you shall soon hear from

La V ———

LETTER

L E T T E R. III.

WE have heard from the Dons of Madrid, who stand on the tiptoe to look down on England : the mighty Spado is out and shall not the islanders tremble ? the breath of their nostrils is terrible, as Job says of the war-horse, and their neck is clothed with thunder.

JESTING apart, we have lately presented *their memorial* stamped with *our name* ; their demands are surely exorbitant ; the restitution of many of their ships taken in an illegal commerce ; a privilege to fish on the coasts of Newfoundland, the Sanctum Sanctorum of the English, which should never be violated, and to which they can have no sort of claim ; and the entire demolition of the British settlements in the bay of Honduras ; these are the chief articles, ushered in by many rhodomontades, to which they expect a speedy, unconditional agreement.

How

How blank would our good cousin, brother and ally Don Carlos have looked had he beheld the countenance of Pitt, when these modest proposals were presented; in spirit and haughtiness he was higher than the Spaniard; he bullied our little minister, and returned the memorial as inadmissible.

In consequence of this the breach has been widened between London and Madrid; the earl of Bristol has remonstrated, and been answered with imperiousness and arrogance; this inflames the soul of Pitt, who declares that the Tower of London shall be taken, sword in hand, before Britain shall stoop to the pride of Spain.

The compact is however on the Tapis-which may lower the crest of this Amadis, and damp the ardour of his countrymen; an exclusion from the ports of Spain and Naples on an equal footing, must hurt their commerce and proportionably extend that of the high-contracting parties;

parties ; the house of Austria must soon yield under the pressure of such a weight, and the ballance of power become an ignis fatuus in politics, a mere ens rationis : this stroke may at length establish that noble plan of empire so long sighed after by our Cardinals, who will look forward with pleasure to behold the outlines of their design filled by the colouring of the Duc de Choiseuil.

As to our own situation here, it is not very agreeable ; we are insulted by bonfires at our doors, and endure many mortifications as Frenchmen and Monsieurs ; these are the appellations of the English for all foreigners, who, in their eyes, are very contemptible beings. --- When we visit Mr. Pitt he is cold and abrupt, rejects our offers, and seems to disdain our suppliant assiduity : our negociation is almost at an end, at least with him, whose superiority of genius prevents our success : *others* however we have tried and found *them* not inaccessible : our old friend
Mr.

Mr. F--x is still faithful and persists in his enmity to *the Declaimer* as he calls him ; yet surely he can be of little consequence to us, as his frequent desertion of *every* party and his known want of *every* virtue have entirely stript him of all his importance --- the duke of B---- is concerned on account of the land-tax, and wishes the war at an end ; this is the richest peer in England and a very grotesque character --- imagine my dear count, a man who has displayed no polite knowledge but that of a gamester, no sense but in saving money, and no judgment but in chusing oxen, imagine such a *larva humanæ faciei* dubbed with the title of Statesman, and dignified as a being of importance ! ---- Our chief strength lies among the children of Attila, as our old pedagogue du Trevier always called the inhabitants of the North ; at their head is a chief who, like that Attila to the Romans, may perhaps prove a *Flagellum dei* to the English ; as a favourite he cannot be a minister, as a Tory he promotes our interest, as inexperienced he must err, and as ignorant in politicks he must blun-

der --- in every sense he is our friend and we must support him:

You have heard strange stories, no doubt, of this man's rise; the voice of Fame has been loud and she has been very free of her nether trump on this occasion; for me, I suspend my judgement on this point, hoping however, with the chearful wishes of a good christian, that the general report may be well-founded, as the strength of favouritism arising from the influence of an artful and abandoned woman, must every where produce the most pernicious consequences --- France has fallen thus low by the intrigues of a woman, and why may not England?

If Pitt falls some may be found faithful to their country and determined to share his fate; one there is, not a friend of ours my dear count, but a friend to his country; not to be swayed from his duty by an attachment to courts or an ambition of honours; we dread his penetration,

his

his influence; and his integrity; and have long marked Temple in our calendar as one of our greatest enemies.

WE have here a minister very high in office, tho' generally deemed of very little publick consequence; he eats indeed for the good of his country, but his abilities rise no higher --- his cook is his bosom-friend, and the bench of bishops are always his guests: Apicuis was a Cordelier and Heliogabalus a Bramin to this bon-vivant --- still we know him incorruptibly honest and dread his personal influence if we provoke him too soon: thus does this feather stand in the way of our designs; and, trifling as he is, we shall find some difficulty in blowing him away.

Some there are, very patient neutrals in the debates of their country; some who veer about with every gale, and having no principle of their own adopt the colour of that interest which stands nearest --- of this kind there is a man of abilities whom we dread and court, we know not yet how effectually;

effectually ; I fear Mr. C --- T --- d disdains to stoop, and become a drudge to meaner abilities.

SOME there are here who once shone eminent on the theatre of publick business, but are now dwindled into insignificance ; noble chancellors who tag together miserable rhimes, in the decline of age ; noble poets without fire or genius who once were called patriots and orators ; you have heard of the English Petrarch, as he calls himself, who is now a tame writer of complimentary verses ; you have seen Champagne almost dead and vapid, still attempting to sparkle, and in the attempt betraying its decay --- such is the state of my good lord L --- t --- n.

WHY do you ask about ladies of quality and the beauties of this court ? --- The world has heard of Lenox and thousands besides, whose names have travelled far beyond the Orleanois ; nature has indeed blest them very liberally, but they seem not to know it --- they have beauty
disgraced

disgraced by an aukward imitation of us, and merit lost for want of a due cultivation of themselves; this I speak only in general terms; the exceptions are many, and a neighbouring island has given this a true picture of every female beauty and every female virtue. You have heard this summer of the lady I mean, who has lately been in France for the benefit of her health — Hamilton is indeed yet without an equal.

OUR court (I call it *our court* as I am a daily visitant) is soon to be adorned with the highest female character; a consort is sought in Germany for this young monarch, whose many virtues render him worthy of every domestick enjoyment they at last have found one exactly suitable, who is a sister of Mecklenburg Strelitz. Amiable in her manners and exalted in her sentiments, she must render a man of sensibility happy in the lowest station; still more necessary as she comes to crown the wishes of a whole nation, and add to the happiness of the father of his people.

WITH

WITH all the inconveniences of a variable sky, the summer in England is not disagreeable ; there is a sprightliness in the verdure of the fields and an opulence in the cultivation of the country, not often observable in France ; I have been for some time on an excursion to Windsor and the villages on the banks of the Thames. --- Come hither my dear de Seignelay, you shall look with pleasure from the summit of Richmond, and think of the Roman Frescati --- you shall wander among the groves of your favourite Pope --- you know him not thoroughly by the wretched translation of the essay on man ; come hither, learn the language, walk in his grotto, and you may then with greater propriety call him your favourite. --- Come hither, and from the green slope of Greenwich you shall see something that may give you an idea of the commerce of the universe --- come and bring Madam de Ternay in her masculine habiliments --- Come hither both of you, as you love or pity

La V_____

L E T T E R

LETTER IV.

OUR *dernier effort* is at last over, and for this time we are baffled in our politicks.--- Curse on the day when I ventured my fame in the motley business of an embassy, where good and ill are so strangely jumbled together, and no merit or diligence can secure success. Oh why did you advise me de Seignelay, to leave the fair banks of my native Loire, for the bustle of intrigue and the villainous commerce of courts and corruption? the exchange was not indeed prudent, but I must bear it, as a reader of Seneca and a lover of philosophy.

WE presented memorial after memorial, made visit after visit, and projected scheme after scheme, but all to no purpose: this cursed Argus has all his eyes open and is deaf to the melody of our agent Mercury; all our little attempts are defeated, and all our flimsy subterfuges seen thro': Newfoundland is not worth half the lies

we

we have told ; we have purchased, fish by fish, every cod on the bank, if fallhoods be deemed an equivalent. --- What then remains but to sneak home to Versailles, creep into the presence thro' the taunts of the courtiers, and implore mercy of the marchioness ? why do we labour, Oh ! de Seignelay, or why do we live, when such an one is to be arbitress of our conduct ?

WHAT were the labours of the Marquis de Torcy at the treaty of Utrecht, compared to the difficulties *we* have undergone ? and yet *he* succeeded and has written mighty memoirs of his own importance: surely there is some blind chance which moves at least the wheel of politics --- natural reasons however may solve this problem. --- Oxford and St. John were not like Pitt — *they* kindly assisted our endeavours, *they* met us more than half-way, *they* were bigotted Tories of the deepest dye ; *this man* looks on us as pick-pockets who come to pilfer his own fame and steal away the honour of his country ; this man watches us

as if we were assassins and subjects of the old man of the mountain ; in short this man is a genuine whig.

WE depart immediately for Dover, and thence for our own France : will not the shore of Calais reproach us, and the very cliffs ridicule our contemptible importance? will not every hot-headed Picard say, *last war we had hostages, last war we had honour and dominion, now we are fallen and Buffy is our peace-broker*; curse on your impatient stupidity ye Picards, ye know not the state of France, ye know not the English orator ; why do ye talk of things above your reach, or why do ye torment us in our misfortunes? O! add not to the distress of the afflicted!

WE have however done something and prepared the way for more fortunate negociators ; we have shaken the great column of this republick, and loosened its foundations : Pitt cannot long stand my friend, his influence in the council is

G

gone,

gone, and the Tories have gained the ascendant; what does his eloquence avail against ignorance and prejudice, or how can he reason when arguments are not considered? when *private affection* intrudes, how can the *publick choice* be regarded? when FAVOURITISM rears her standard, how few are the troops of PUBLIC ZEAL and UNBIASSED VIRTUE! did not the great BELISARIUS sink in the favour of JUSTINIAN, bowed down by the weight of some court-minion; the slave of the empress Theodora's lust, and the mushroom of her appetite? The world has nothing new, de Seignelay; a dull repetition of the same facts, the same vices and the same corruptions; change but the names and some few collateral matters, and modern days may be found exactly similar to those of the Roman Legislator.

DID you ever before, my dear Count, hear a man declaim against his own interest? I hate Pitt; as a Frenchman I rancorously hate him; can I avoid however the feelings of a man, can I patiently see the merit of such an one neglected
for

for the voice of seducing pseudo-mentors, or the insinuations of female artifice ? can I see strength of genius pine unsupported, and the loftiest abilities and the most unshaken probity decline unregarded ? can I see this without shuddering at the weakness of human nature, without wishing myself in the land of the Houynhms, the new-discovered country of the English Rabelais, where reason is the privilege of horses and instinct the only guide of human Yahoos ? such an instinct were better than perverted reason.

WE have yesterday seen the grandeur of England and the solemnity of her antient ceremonies ; we have seen the king and his consort crowned with the acclamations of thousands and the united splendor of the whole nation : I thought of the days of Edward the third and Henry the fifth, as the peers passed before me in the robes of antient times---I thought of the conquest of France ; I sighed and compared this age with that of our Charles VI. and Philip de Valois --- I am be-

come splenetic my friend ; the melancholy state of my country intrudes on all my reflections and embitters all my enjoyments.

THE coronation of the king of France and Navarre is much inferior to that of this island-king ; I saw before me all the orders of the state --- the nobility --- the counsellors of the king --- the judges --- the great officers of the realm --- all who could contribute to the grandeur of the procession, and the dignity of the ceremony --- I saw the bishops of this heretick people, as our good friend the abbot of Thouars calls them ; they seemed very pious, allowing for their heterodoxy --- I saw the solemn act of investiture, the ceremony of the feudal submissions of homage and fealty, and the inthronization of a great monarch to rule over a free people, to guard their rights, redress their grievances and support their constitution. --- This was the purport of an oath, which made me tremble at the weight of care it laid on the bosom of the Monarch ---

Of

Of an oath framed by a brave people as a barrier against the incroachments of arbitrary power --- when this covenant is broken by their king they think their own contracts cancelled, and their obligations rescinded: as the ties of social union bind all parties reciprocally, when *one* evades or breaks the knot, *the other* is no longer restrained and resistance becomes the natural alternative.

I saw also the female nobility of England, and I saw their youthful and amiable queen --- I shall not attempt to describe them, lest I become the jest of Madame de Ternay --- she has ridiculed me immoderately on my warmth in praise of the Irish dutchess; as if beauty was peculiar to France or elegance of air the incommunicable attribute of those who walk in the Tuilleries --- let us be contented my dear count, that our ladies are superior to all others; let us allow these Transmarines their pittance of merit, and some portion of our praise:

Monfieur

Monfieur de Revol is juft come from Paris with fecret directions ; one of us is to remain here incognito, to affift the progrefs of our defign and attend the motions of this court : Monfieur de Buffy has mentioned me, but I am in doubt of the honour of the employment --- the fituation of a fpy is furely not honourable, yet what is that of an ambaffador, or how have Grotius, Wicquefort and Puffendorf defined the nature of that office ? I am in doubt my dear Count ; fhall I confult the good of my country, or look upon the height of my ancestors and the blood of the Montmorencies ? you fhall foon hear of my determination, as I fhall immediately fet off for Paris, unlefs my pride be defeated and my patriotifm triumphant --- in the latter cafe you may ftill expect to receive fome accounts of this country, as you have difpenfed with the ftudied art of writing, and the regularity of connection : — ftill continue to bear with my trifling and inaccuracy, and remember your friend



La V—

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